

Emperor of Korea a Man of Constant Fears; First Dread Being Assassination

How Three Americans Once Stood Guard Over Him and the Crown Prince During an Uprising...A Weird Figure at the Burial of the Empress...His Personal Side

HISTORY tells of a Korean general who had so many enemies that he was afraid to sleep like other people at night, and was also afraid to sleep naturally in the daytime. Accordingly, he trained himself to sleep sitting bolt upright at a table with his eyes wide open, and a sword in each hand.

The present Emperor of Korea, Yi Hwang, does not sleep with his eyes open, sitting upright at a table, but he comes pretty near it. Since his accession to the Korean throne in 1894, he has had many desperate enemies. Indeed, the murder of his Queen in 1895, he did turn day into night by sleeping then and holding his Cabinet meetings at night. For some weeks, when rumors of assassination were ripe at a certain time a few years ago, all the food which passed his Majesty's lips was prepared by an American missionary and sent secretly to the palace. Thus, taking the years through, the old Korean general asleep at his table, with his straining eyes staring straight ahead, is a very fair picture of the state of mind in which the Korean Emperor has lived these many years.

One night, seven years ago, it was rumored in Seoul that a mob was to attack the palace on a certain night. Lacking all confidence in the staying qualities of his soldiers and guards, the Emperor sent post haste for three Americans to stay with him during the night. He and the crown prince remained in their sleeping rooms, while the "three musketeers" played chess in the anteroom. The moving shadows, cast on the paper walls which divided the rooms, told the guards that his Majesty and son were anything but restless.

The night wore on until at last, with a promptness that would have done credit to a South American revolution, the noise of the emperor's without the palace was heard. Instantly the Americans entered the royal bedroom and surrounded the Emperor and prince, and the number of six-shooters in evidence in their hands and their belts would have excited the envy of a Mexican cowboy. The uprising was quelled, because the authorities had been warned and prepared, but as the tumult raged in the streets and along the walls and gates, the intensest excitement reigned in the palace. The Emperor and prince posted themselves between the Americans, and in their agony seized their guardians' hands. Their terror and their attitude brought home to the foreigners the full meaning of the situation, and the Emperor's life, and his ever-present fear of an untimely end. Figuratively speaking, the poor man is like that general who never slept except with his eyes open wide.

At the present crisis this impotent potentate attracts the attention of the world, to just a hint at the start of the haunted life he has led in order to show what his mental attitude has been to all around him. If his greatest fear has been that of the assassin's return of exiled Korean noblemen in Japan has been the second greatest, and in a way the two are one in substance, for the return of pretenders to the Korean throne would mean assassination. Thus he has feared that friends about him were traitors in disguise and would make away with him, and he has feared that traitors, known to be desperate men, who have been exiled would return and kill him. And friends and enemies have played these two games off against the other on his Majesty through many years to gain many ends.

The government of Korea is an unlimited monarchy; the present dynasty has existed since the founding of Seoul, in 1392. It is an interesting fact in Korea that each new dynasty found a new Seoul, which means "capital." The kings have been despots, and the present Emperor has solidified the beheading of many men, even into recent days, though it is not legal to do so today. With Korea the raising of the finances has been a difficult task, and the dispensing of money the task of vast evil. Everything has been for sale in Korea, even the good will of royalty; offices, such as governorships, are purchased, the incumbents being compelled first to get back their outlay and then a salary. The taxation laws are extremely heavy on the poor, the rich often escaping. Owning two bulls is considered a misfortune among the common people, since the owner will be judged to have accumulated money, and as likely as not will be asked

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to loan money or his second bull to the Governor. The custom house brings in considerable income. What proportion of Korea's assets gets into the imperial treasury it is difficult to say. From all sources the total receipts is small, and foreign intricacies with money to their hand have, in the past, had an influence with the Korean Emperor. It has been rumored that the recent Russian concession in the timber lands of the Yalu and Teumen was obtained by means of a liberal bribe. And so, next to the Emperor's fear of his personal enemies come his financial worries.

Indeed, the murder of his Queen in 1895, he did turn day into night by sleeping then and holding his Cabinet meetings at night. For some weeks, when rumors of assassination were ripe at a certain time a few years ago, all the food which passed his Majesty's lips was prepared by an American missionary and sent secretly to the palace. Thus, taking the years through, the old Korean general asleep at his table, with his straining eyes staring straight ahead, is a very fair picture of the state of mind in which the Korean Emperor has lived these many years.

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on a wide floor myself, I rolled around until I was comfortably lodged fairly against what I found out later was a door to an adjoining room, which was occupied by the Russian minister. All this was made plain to me when the ceremony was announced and his Excellency fell over me in the attempt to get out.

The sarcophagus was raised to the summit of the high mound, which contained the mausoleum, on an inclined plane. Beside this plane stood the royal marquee, and in the doorway, as the car moved slowly upward, stood the King and crown prince watching its progress. The darkness of the night, the vast crowds and flaming torches, the long lines of soldiers and a squad of Russian Cossacks, the corps diplomatique in their full dress, the crowds of Korean noblemen, all united to make the occasion one of the most singular that an Occidental could ever witness in the East.

Little is known of the family life of the Emperor of Korea and his wives. In the days of the Empress Min the Empress was a political factor of great consequence. This is not true to-day. Nor is the marvellously ridiculous story which had large circulation in the Northwest recently, to the effect that a Wisconsin girl is Empress of Korea. The story affirmed that a Miss Brown, a missionary, had been married to the Korean Emperor. There was never a missionary by the name of Miss Brown in Korea, and no American woman has married Emperor Yi Hwang. A little piece of Seoul gossip a short time ago was to the effect that the King had purchased a foreigner's home in Seoul in which to house one of his quarters; the house was of two stories, the first stone and the second of brick; the wife began her career by having the second story pulled down, as it made the house "so high." Korean houses are all of one story only.

A POLITICAL JUMBLE.

The subject of the Korean Emperor's relation to the wider affairs of his little empire is a tangled problem which no man can fathom. Korea has been a seething cauldron of politics and her Emperor has been besieged in the past decade by various emissaries, from various courts, some of them with arguments that no Oriental could withstand. After the Japan-China war he found himself in the midst of a pro-Japanese Cabinet and soon bolted to the Russian legation. After a year, during which Russia secured the ascendancy in Korea, he returned to his palace. The situation at the present moment is most interesting; Japan is again occupying Korea, and is slowly securing political influence commensurate with her commercial interests. She is the only real political friend Korea ever had, though when in control of Korea in 1895 she hurt her influence by administering too great doses of reform. She once more has the ear of the Emperor; her experience has taught her many lessons. The foreigners (American and English) feel that the present situation is a very bad one for Korea if Japanese influence remains paramount in Seoul; and they are certain that his Majesty would follow out Japanese plans for the development of Korea if he was made sure he would have protection against physical harm from Russian intrigues, the claimants to the Korean throne, and the Japanese, and certain desperate Korean "statesmen" who hang upon his skirts and threaten him when they are balked in their money-sucking game of government.

Back again to the inevitable underlying fear which possesses the Emperor of Korea! He has had no power, while being all-powerful, in a figurative sense he has set for years, as he did between the American missionaries on the night of the attempted emute seven years ago, but when, in fear, he has reached out for firm hands to support him he has found hands that were strong, but which would not direct him or his country to freedom and happiness.

From any standpoint Japan's occupation of Korea now and after securing the Emperor's ear is of momentous interest. For Korea, the events of the war will have a tremendous significance, and no onlooker will be more anxious than this King upon whose head a crown has rested forty years as restlessly as ever crown lay on mortal head.

Saved from those who have hovered about him and sapped his strength let it turn against and slay them, Yi Hwang might become a strong ruler. If he has been weak it was through lack of confidence in his supporters, whose most puerile whims have often been obeyed.

ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT.
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"Mis' Naggin," said Martha Green, solemnly. "They's jes' one thing, an' th' surest one, thet ye hain't done yit. You want to turn your house 'round on the foundation, so the back's at th' front an' th' front's at the back, an' Jonas's hant will never excede. Then would come a louder howl than ever.

"O-w-w-w-w, wow, wow!" Jonas would yell. "I'll go back to my grave an' stay there. I swan I will!"

"I'll teach ye, drat ye!" Mary Jane would reply. Then would come another howl.

"O-w-w-w-w-w, wow, wow!" Don't Mary Jane! O-w-w-w-w, wow, wow!"

That howl, dying away over the hill toward the cemetery, was the last sound that was ever heard from the ghost of Jonas Naggin. They say that Mary Jane made a beautiful corpse and wore a calm peaceful smile as she lay in the coffin next day.

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Corner of a Deserted Royal Palace

The Formal Dinner Not Now A Very Elaborate Function

Tendency Is to Limit Time Spent at Table and to Serve Fewer Courses...Eastern vs. Western Taste

THE nerves of frequent diners-out are now taken into consideration. Next to being good it is thought most important that a dinner should be short.

For the last two years courses have been dropping off, until where a banquet of twelve courses was formerly served, it has now decreased to eight. The menus of the old-fashioned dinners look like gorges through which nobody would find it possible to sit to dine. Oysters, soup, fish and roasts and a few vegetables, with the proper desert, are all that is served at the dinner given by persons who are in the habit of going to and giving the best in the city. Banquets, of course, are a little more elaborate, but they are not the "feeds" they were. Where it used to take two hours and more to serve the menu now it takes much less, so that more time can be given to talking.

As banquets formerly were it was impossible to get any enjoyment out of the menu, because the courses were so numerous that a guest would only get one or two mouthfuls out of the dishes of each course. If he tried to eat from every dish, as he was supposed to do, he could not have gone through a quarter of the meal before he had reached the limit of his capacity. Even with the abbreviated lists of dishes society folk find dinner too long, and may keep on shortening it until it will be as bad in the one extreme as it was in the other, and a man attending a dinner will have to eat a luncheon before he goes so as to be sure not to get up from the table hungry.

The reason for abbreviating the dinners is no doubt due to the fact that people cannot endure sitting in a room, which is generally overheated, for two hours or more. There are often social functions, waiting, too, such as a dance or a game of whist. In the latter case too much dinner makes it impossible to play. When a dance is to come after it is injudicious for the guests to eat a very hearty meal beforehand, for it is injurious to them and they do not enjoy themselves. In the case of either a game or a dance the dinner is the least important function of the evening, so far as the practical side is concerned, and it is the first to be cut down.

The idea of shortening the dinners originated in the East, but the people of the West, seeing the advantage of it, were not slow in adopting the plan. Dinners this year have also been shortened by serving the courses more promptly. There is scarcely time to eat the food with deliberation, which is necessary to good digestion. The portions are small and the waiters numerous.

Superintendent Hurley, of the Columbia Club, bears out the statement that the dinners are getting shorter and he contends that it is better for every one. He says that a reputable hotel or club does not lose and that the person giving the dinner knows exactly what he is getting; also that there is much difference between the

dinners and banquets given in the East and those in the West.

The tastes are very different in the two parts of the country, he thinks. The people of the West like plainer food and they are also much more frequently than the Easterners. "I remember," he said, "when I came to this city I brought a French cook with me who had been cooking in the East, and while he was a perfect artist in his line he could not please the people of this town for the reason that the food he prepared was too fancy. People here do not like an entree of sweetbread or anything of that kind, and in the majority of diners we are asked not to serve them. Now, in the East, all diners have an entree and would not be considered complete without it."

The Easterners also like fish, oysters and game," he went on, "while in the West where game and fish are both plentiful, especially game, they don't care anything about them for dinner. The only reason I can give for this is that there is a difference in taste as in everything else. I have spent much time in both the East and West and have noted quite frequently that the food eaten in this part of the country is of a heavier nature, even to the vegetables."

At the dinners given now there are more waiters so that there will be no delay. Shortly before Lent began one of the best known hosts in the city gave a dinner to a party of men to which quite a large number of guests was invited. There were eight waiters to serve the dinner. In less than an hour the men were smoking in the dining room. Twenty minutes later half of the guests were gone. The host had got through another dinner and social progress was advanced by the incident, which had occupied less than two hours for the majority of the persons present.

Dinners of twelve now should be served by at least three waiters. And the rule is to keep things moving. There is none of the old-time dawdling through the dinners in these days.

As if to compensate for this rather perfunctory way of entertaining guests, which always has the air of getting them to assemble and then doing one's duty and turning them out as quickly as possible, there has come some additional formality in the manner of dining.

Men have occasionally been at a loss this year after dinner, when the women were about to leave the room, in seeing the host rise and offer his arm to the woman he happened to take out. They have quickly learned that it is a new fashion, and has only been adopted this last winter, for the men to escort the women to the drawing room, afterward returning to the dining room to smoke and leave the women with their coffee.

The custom originated also in the East, and there are not many Indianapolis men who have "got on" to it, but it will doubtless soon be the common fashion for the men after a dinner to escort the women from the room. This little attention does something to counteract the growing informality of the dinner as a means of entertainment.

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